

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

IN THE CLAIMS:

1 and 2 (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The article of claim [[1]] 5 in which one or more intermediate layers are interposed between the transition layer and the metal bearing color layer, said intermediate layer(s) being colorless, transparent, and less than 400 Å in thickness.

4.(canceled)

5. (previously presented) An article having on at least a portion of its surface, a coating of a thin transition layer consisting of a metal bearing material and having a composition that varies from an exterior first composition comprising a metal to a second composition beneath the exterior first composition, which transition layer is superimposed on a metal bearing color layer and is substantially transparent and colorless to visible light, in which the first composition is a noble metal chosen from the group consisting of gold, silver, platinum, platinum group metals, or an alloy thereof.

6. (previously presented) An article having on at least a portion of its surface, a coating of a thin transition layer consisting of a metal bearing material and having a composition that varies from an exterior first composition comprising a metal to a second composition beneath the exterior first composition, which transition layer is superimposed on a metal bearing color layer and is substantially transparent and colorless to visible light, in which the first composition is a corrosion resistant metal chosen from the group consisting of chromium or stainless steel, or an alloy thereof.

7. (currently amended) The article of claim [[1]] 5 in which the metal bearing color layer has the same composition as the second composition in the transition layer.

8. (currently amended) The article of claim [[1]] 5 in which the composition of the metal bearing color layer is chosen from one or more of Zr, Ti, Hf, C and N.

9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) The article of claim [[1]] 5 in which the transition layer is deposited by a PVD process.

11. (currently amended) The article of claim [[1]] 5 in which the metal bearing color layer is deposited by a PVD process.

12. (currently amended) The article of claim [[1]] 5 in which the transition between the first composition and the second composition of the transition layer is smooth.

13. (currently amended) The article of claim [[1]] 5 in which the transition between the first composition and the second composition of the transition layer is in discrete steps.

14. (currently amended) The article of claim [[1]] 5 in which the first composition of the transition layer provides corrosion resistance.

15–17 (canceled)

18. (currently amended) The article of claim [[1]] 5 wherein the transition layer has a thickness of about 150 Å or less.

19–29 (canceled)

30. (currently amended) The article of claim [[1]] 5, wherein the transition layer is adjacent to the metal bearing color layer.

31. (new) The article of claim 6 in which one or more intermediate layers are interposed between the transition layer and the metal bearing color layer, said intermediate layer(s) being colorless, transparent, and less than 400 Å in thickness.

32. (new) The article of claim 6 in which the metal bearing color layer has the same composition as the second composition in the transition layer.

33. (new) The article of claim 6 in which the composition of the metal bearing color layer is chosen from one or more of Zr, Ti, Hf, C and N.

34. (new) The article of claim 6 in which the transition layer is deposited by a PVD process.

35. (new) The article of claim 6 in which the metal bearing color layer is deposited by a PVD process.

36. (new) The article of claim 6 in which the transition between the first composition and the second composition of the transition layer is smooth.

37. (new) The article of claim 6 in which the transition between the first composition and the second composition of the transition layer is in discrete steps.

38. (new) The article of claim 6 in which the first composition of the transition layer provides corrosion resistance.

39. (new) The article of claim 6, wherein the transition layer has a thickness of about 150 Å or less.

40. (new) The article of claim 6, wherein the transition layer is adjacent to the metal bearing color layer.